CLAIMS

I claim as my invention:

1. A method of obtaining data for an application from a server using a browser program module for accessing information from the server by forming a request having a header, comprising the steps of:

(a) said browser program module receiving, from the application, a request for data offered by the server;

(b) transmitting, from the browser program module, a request for the data to the server, wherein the request includes header information identifying a characteristic of the application; and

(c) receiving data from the server responsive to the request, wherein the received data is formatted in accordance with the header information.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said request is formulated by said browser program module pursuant to a HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP).

3. The method of claim 2, wherein said request further includes an HTTP User-agent header identifying said web browser to said server.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein said header information identifies said application.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein said header information identifies a version of said application.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein said header information identifies a language setting of said application.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said header information identifies a locale setting of said application.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein said header information identifies a characteristic of a network condition.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein said header information identifies a user interface characteristic of said application.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein said header information identifies a physical property of a device on which said application operates.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein said header information identifies a characteristic of a graphical display area used by said application.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein said characteristic of said graphical display area is a size of said graphical display area.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein said characteristic of said graphical display area is a resolution of said graphical display area.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein said header information identifies a characteristic of an audio capability of said application.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein said characteristic is a font used by said application.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein at least portions of said browser program module are incorporated within said application.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein said header information identifying a characteristic of the application identifies a user preference for said application.

18. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the steps recited in claim 1.

19. A portable computing device including a computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the steps recited in claim 1, said portable computing device being configured to allow a user of said device to access textual information provided by said server.

20. The method of claim 1, wherein said application is a reader application for reading textual information.

21. A computer-readable medium having stored thereon a HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP) request for information, comprising:

a) a first data field containing an HTTP Initial Request Line;

b) a second data field containing an HTTP User-agent header, wherein said HTTP User-agent header identifies a browser program module which generated said HTTP request; and

c) a third data field containing a supplemental request header, wherein said supplemental request header identifies an application for which said browser program module generated said HTTP request, and identifies one or more additional characteristics of said application.

22. A method for providing information on the Internet, comprising the steps of:

a) receiving, from a browser program module via the Internet, a request for a web page;

b) examining said received request for header information identifying said web browser;

c) examining said received request for header information identifying a status of an application for which said web browser sent said request;

d) transmitting a response to said browser program module responsive to said request, wherein said web page is a modified form of said requested web page, and wherein a difference between said transmitted web page and said requested web page is based upon said status of said application for which said web browser sent said request.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein said header information identifying a status of said application identifies a size of a graphical display area to be used by said application to display a web page.

24. The method of claim 22, wherein said header information identifying a status of said application identifies a font used by said application.

25. The method of claim 22, wherein said header information identifying a status of said application identifies a version, language, regional setting, state, user interface theme, or configuration of said application.

26. The method of claim 22, wherein said header information identifying a status of said application identifies a property of a physical device or network used by said application.

27. The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of selecting a version of said requested web page from a plurality of versions of said requested web page for transmission to said browser program module, wherein said step of selecting is in accordance with said header information identifying a status of said application.

28. The method of claim 22, further comprising the steps of:

a) retrieving said requested web page; and

b) modifying said requested web page in accordance with said header information identifying a status of said application.

29. The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of gathering statistical information regarding applications that request said requested web page.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein said statistical information relates to a characteristic, configuration, or state of the applications that request said requested web page.

31. The method of claim 22, wherein said request is a HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP) request.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein said header information identifying said browser program module is an HTTP User-agent header.

33. A computer-readable medium having computer-readable instructions for executing the steps recited in claim 22.

34. A computing device communicatively connected to a network, comprising:

a processing unit; and

one or more memories, wherein said one or more memories store a program module containing computer-executable instructions for performing the following steps:

receiving, via said network, a request for a web page from a web browser, wherein said request includes header information identifying a characteristic of an application for which said web browser generated said request; and

transmitting said requested web page responsive to said request.

35. The computing device of claim 34, further comprising the step of selecting a first version of said requested web page from a plurality of versions of said requested web page stored in said one or more memories for transmission responsive to said request, wherein said step of selecting is performed in accordance with said header information identifying a characteristic of said application.

36. The computing device of claim 35, wherein said header information identifies a size or resolution of a graphical display area used by said application.

37. The computing device of claim 34, further comprising the steps of:

retrieving said requested web page from said one or more memories; and

modifying said requested web page in accordance with said header information identifying a characteristic of said application prior to said step of transmitting.

38. A computing device communicatively connected to a network, comprising:

a processing unit; and

one or more memories, wherein said one or more memories store a browser program module containing computer-executable instructions for generating requests for information from said network, said requests having headers, and for performing the following steps:

receiving, from an application program module, a request for a web page available via said network;

preparing a network request for said web page, said network request including header information identifying a characteristic of said application program module; and

transmitting said network request.

39. The computing device of claim 38, wherein said header information identifies a size or resolution of a graphical display area used by said application program module.

40. A computing system for requesting and displaying web pages using the Internet, comprising:

a) a user device communicatively coupled to said Internet, said user device including a processor and a memory storing a program module containing computer-executable instructions for performing the following steps:

i) generating an Internet request for a web page, wherein said Internet request includes header information identifying a characteristic of a display area used by an application operating on said processor of said user device; and

ii) transmitting said Internet request to said Internet; and

b) a server device communicatively coupled to said Internet, said server device including a processor and a memory storing a program module containing computer-executable instructions for performing the following steps:

i) receiving, via said Internet, said Internet request; and

ii) transmitting a version of said requested web page responsive to said Internet request, wherein said version is determined in accordance with said header information.